



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, Colorado 81625-1129
<http://www.co.blm.gov/lspa/index.htm>

In Reply Refer To: (1060)

December 1, 2014

Brandon L. Jensen, Esq.
Budd-Falen Law Offices
300 East 18th Street
P.O. Box 346
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003-0346

Re: Request for Removal of Excess Wild Horses in Sand Wash Basin, Northwest Colorado, Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado (Steve Raftopolous, Grazing Permittee)

Dear Mr. Jensen:

Thank you for your letter dated August 14, 2014, regarding the above request from your client, Steve Raftopolous, who is also one of our BLM grazing permittees who grazes within the Sand Wash Basin Horse Management Area (HMA). At the outset, I would like to acknowledge Steve's voluntary non-use of his allotment over the past several years and his willingness to work with us here in the Little Snake Field Office.

You are correct in your assertion that the number of wild horses in the Sand Wash Basin is presently estimated to be above the appropriate management level (AML) as determined by the *Little Snake Resource Management Plan, 2011*. We have not been positioned to gather excess horses since 2008 (which is when the last horse gather occurred) for a variety of reasons, most specifically related to our holding facilities being full and limited adoptions of gathered wild horses.

Recognizing that population control of Sand Wash Basin wild horses is a critical outcome for successful herd management, the Little Snake Field Office, through the help of our volunteers, has been actively darting mares with an allowable birth control protocol to try to limit the reproductive capability of the herd. At this time, we project that the success of this birth control program will be measurable during the foaling season of the upcoming spring and summer, 2015. In addition, I have been pro-actively trying to seek other reproductive control options to augment the darting program but the current protocols for such are not yet approved. However, I have proposed to our Resource Advisory Council at the upcoming December 4, 2014 meeting in Grand Junction, Colorado that they consider a resolution to support the Little Snake Field Office in securing funding for the volunteers to increase our darting capability and further reduce the number of horses being born each season.